

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 4177

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, MILI, LE, SY
SUBJECT: LEBANON: DISCUSSION WITH DEPFONMIN KADDUR

SUMMARY: MEETING WITH DEPFONMIN KADDUR JULY 20 GAVE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO REITERATE US APPRECIATION OF SYRIA'S CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN LEBANON AND OUR HOPE THAT SYRIA WOULD CONTINUE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT. AMBASSADOR LEONARD DISCUSSED RENEWAL OF UNIFIL MANDATE IN SEPTEMBER AND IMPORTANCE US ATTACHES TO RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF LAF UNITS TO SOUTH. KADDUR LABELED CHRISTIAN MILITIAS AS PRIMARY OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS IN REUNIFYING LEBANON AND URGED USG TO PUT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL TO STOP ARMS SUPPLIES TO MILITIAS. END SUMMARY.

1. AMBASSADOR LEONARD, HOWELL AND CHARGE CALLED ON KADDUR JULY 20 TO DISCUSS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON. CHARGE INTRODUCED DISCUSSION AS PART OF OUR
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CONTINUING EXCHANGES WITH SYRIA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR PAST SUPPORT FOR SYRIAN AND ADF ROLE IN LEBANON. CHARGE SAID WE SAW NO ALTERNATIVE TO ADF AT THIS POINT AND WE RECOGNIZED SYRIAN SACRIFICES IN LEBANON. HE HAD ALSO NOTED A NUMBER OF FAVORABLE TRENDS, INCLUDING FACT THAT CEASEFIRE WAS HOLDING WITH APPARENTLY DIMINISHING NUMBER OF PROVOCATIONS,

SOME DISENGAGEMENT IN EAST BEIRUT, AND PRESIDENT SARKIS HAVING WITHDRAWN HIS RESIGNATION. THE MAJOR TASK NOW IN OUR VIEWPOINT WAS TO OBTAIN A REDUCTION IN ARMS AND IN ARMED MANIFESTATIONS BY MILITIAS AND OTHER ARMED GROUPS IN LEBANON.

2. KADDUR WELCOMED US VISITORS AND EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT US APPRECIATED SYRIAN ROLE IN LEBANON. SYRIAN SACRIFICES WERE FOR THE SAKE OF LEBANESE UNITY, INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY, HE SAID. THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN SYRIA'S FUNDAMENTAL POLICY IN THIS REGARD, NOR WOULD THERE BE IN FUTURE. KADDUR THEN REVIEWED HISTORY OF SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON ALONG FAMILIAR LINES.

3. KADDUR DEPICTED CURRENT SITUATION IN EAST BEIRUT AS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF THE ISRAELI/CHAMOUNIST/PHALANGE CHALLENGE TO LEGITIMATE LEBANESE AUTHORITY. HE LINKED ISRAEL'S RURNOVER OF AUTHORITY TO CHRISTIAN MILITIAS RATHER THAN UNIFIL IN THE SOUTH WITH THE PHALANGE ASSASSINATION OF FRANGIEH AND MILITIA PROVOCATIONS AGAINST ADF FORCES IN EAST BEIRUT, LABELLING ALL THESE INCIDENTS AS PART OF A CONCERTED PLAN BACKED BY ISRAEL TO DISRUPT AUTHORITY OF LEBANESE STATE AND PERPETUATE INSTABILITY IN LEBANON. EVERYONE KNEW, HE SAID, THAT CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAD BEEN RECEIVING ARMS FROM ISRAEL. SYRIA HAD ALSO RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT ISRAELI EXPERTS WERE HELPING MILITIAS.

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SYRIA, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD HELPED MAINTAIN ORDER AND SECURITY IN LEBANON IN ORDER TO REESTABLISH LEBANESE UNITY AND REBUILD LEGITIMATE INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE. SYRIA WAS PLEASED THAT SARKIS HAD DECLARED HIS INTENTION NOT TO RESIGN.

4. KADDUR SAID HE THOUGHT US COULD HELP SITUATION BY EXERTING PRESSURE ON ISRAEL NOT TO SEND ARMS. ISRAEL'S SUPPLY-LINE AND FORMER COS GUR'S RECENT STATEMENT WERE ENCOURAGING CHAMOUNISTS IN BELIEF ISRAEL WOULD SUPPORT THEM. HOW, HE ASKED, CAN ADF ATTEMPT TO LIMIT ARMS IN HANDS OF MILITIAS WHEN OTHER SOURCES ARE SENDING THEM MORE ARMS.

5. KADDUR ALSO REFERRED TO US IDEA OF CONVOKING SECURITY COUNCIL, EXPRESSING SYRIAN VIEW THAT THIS WOULD NOT HAVE HELPED SITUATION BUT RATHER WOULD HAVE KINDLED FURTHER EXPLOSIONS. ONLY LEBANON HAD RIGHT TO ASK FOR UN SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION OF THIS PROBLEM. SYRIA WAS PLEASED, HOWEVER, THAT US HAD ONLY BEEN CONSULTING ON THIS POSSIBILITY AND HAD NOT ACTUALLY CONVOKED SECURITY COUNCIL.

6. AMBASSADOR LEONARD NOTED THAT IN MANY RESPECTS US AND

SYRIA WERE WORKING ON PARALLEL TRACKS IN LEBANON. SYRIA'S ROLE WAS WIDELY UNDERSTOOD AT UN HE SAID, NOT JUST BY USG. MANY NATIONS SUPPORTED ADF BECAUSE PARTITION WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLE AND UNTHINKABLE. THERE HAD BEEN IMMEDIATE CONCERN, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE DANGER WHICH THREATENED RESIGNATION OF SARKIS REPRESENTED TO LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY IN LEBANON. IN ADDITION, WHILE WE UNDERSTOOD HARMFUL ROLE OF MILITIAS, WE REMAINED PUZZLED HOW TO BUILD ON POSITIVE ROLE SYRIA WAS PLAYING. THE CEASEFIRE IN EAST BEIRUT WAS ONLY A TRUCE AND WE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE REMOVAL OF WEAPONS FROM IRRESPONSIBLE HANDS.

7. CHARGE NOTED THAT US HAD BEEN URGING RESTRAINT BOTH WITH CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADERS AND WITH ISRAEL AND SAID
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WE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE HOPED THAT SYRIA ALSO WOULD CONTINUE TO SHOW RESTRAINT IN ORDER TO ALLOW POLITICAL PROCESSES CURRENTLY UNDERWAY TO HAVE A CHANCE TO ACT. HE NOTED THAT EFFORTS TOWARDS CONSENSUS BETWEEN CERTAIN MUSLIM, DRUZE AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS SEEMED TO BE IN PROGRESS.

8. KADDUR REPLIED THAT COALITION OF VARIOUS LEBANESE PARTIES CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE WAS NATURAL DEVELOPMENT. PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS HAD WANTED TO SPREAD THEIR HEGEMONY OVER OTHER GROUPS IN LEBANON AND THIS WAS A FORM OF SELF-DEFENSE TO PROVE THAT THOSE GROUPS DID NOT REPRESENT THE LEBANESE PEOPLE. THERE WAS A GROWING CONSENSUS IN LEBANON THAT CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL HAD TO BE BLOCKED.

9. AMB. LEONARD AGREED THAT MILITIAS MUST BE RESTRAINED BUT NOTED THAT SUCH MEASURES WERE BASICALLY NEGATIVE ONES. A LONG RUN SOLUTION WOULD REQUIRE POSITIVE MEASURES AS WELL AND WE HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED THAT PRES. SARKIS HAD NOT MOVED MORE VIGOROUSLY IN SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES OPENED BY HIS THREATENED RESIGNATION.

10. KADDUR NOTED THAT THERE WAS SOME MOVEMENT BUT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH A LEBANESE ARMY WITHOUT A NATIONAL CONSENSUS. MILITIAMEN MUST BE BROUGHT BACK TO BELIEVING THEY ARE LEBANESE CITIZENS. GOL IS STUDYING NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION UNDER WHICH ALL LEBANESE WOULD BE CALLED ON TO SERVE IN THE NATIONAL ARMY AND IT WOULD REPRESENT ALL PARTIES. THIS WAS A HEALTHY AND NATURAL POINT OF DEPARTURE, BUT IT MIGHT TAKE TIME. HE SAID HE THOUGHT SYRIA AND US NEEDED TO COOPERATE WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF OUR COMMON OBJECTIVES. CHARGE ENDED THIS PHASE OF DISCUSSION AGREEING THAT US AND SYRIA SHARED MANY OVERALL OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON BUT WE HAD DIFFERED ON TACTICS RECENTLY
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EMPLOYED IN EAST BEIRUT. THESE HAD HAD NEGATIVE EFFECT ON
US OPINION AND HAD INCREASED RISK OF BROADER CONFLICT.

11. TURNING TO SITUATION IN SOUTH, HOWELL NOTED THAT USG
HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN EFFORTS TO REBUILD LEBANESE ARMY
AND WE THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT SOME LEBANESE UNITS
BE DEPLOYED IN THE SOUTH VERY SOON AS A SYMBOL OF PROGRESS
TOWARDS REESTABLISHING LEBANESE AUTHORITY THERE.

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EXDIS

12. KADDUR REPLIED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO FIND
SUCH TROOPS BEFORE THEY COULD BE SENT. SIILASVUO, HE SAID,
HAD TOLD SYRIANS HE WANTED SYMBOLIC LEBANESE TROOPS TO GO
SOUTH BUT SITUATION WAS DIFFICULT. THE MILITIAS WOULD
REFUSE TO COOPERATE WITH LEBANESE FORCES. INTRODUCTION OF
LAF INTO SOUTH MIGHT SPARK FIGHTS OR DESERTION OF
LEBANESE SOLDIERS TO THE MILITIAS. LOGISTICAL
PROBLEMS ALSO WOULD PUT ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON UNIFIL. ALL
PROGRESS IN NORTH OR SOUTH LEBANON, KADDUR SAID, WAS

TIED TO THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. ONLY WHEN THEIR DISRUPTIVE ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN HALTED COULD LEBANESE GOVERNMENT BEGIN TO DEPLOY ITS FORCES IN BEIRUT, SEND FORCES SOUTH IN COOPERATION WITH UNIFIL, AND TAKE OTHER MEASURES TO REINFORCE GRADUAL CONSOLIDATION OF NATIONAL AUTHORITY OF STATE.

12. AMB. LEONARD NOTED THAT THIS PROGRAM WAS REASONABLE AND SECRET

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ACCORDED WITH USG THINKING. UNIFIL MANDATE, HOWEVER, WOULD COME UP FOR RENEWAL IN MID-SEPTEMBER AND IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE SOME VISIBLE PROGRESS TOWARDS REESTABLISHMENT OF LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN SOUTH BY THAT TIME. GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAD CONTRIBUTED FORCES TO UNIFIL WOULD WANT TO SEE PROGRESS IN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ITS ROLE. STRONG SUPPORT OF ARAB NATIONS FOR RENEWAL WOULD ALSO BE IMPORTANT.

13. KADDUR SAID HE THOUGHT SYMBOLIC LEBANESE ARMY UNITS COULD BE SENT SOUTH BEFORE TIME OF MANDATE RENEWAL BUT PRESSURE WOULD HAVE TO BE EXERTED ON ISRAEL AND CHRISTIAN MILITIAS TO FACILITATE THIS TASK. OTHERWISE, LEBANESE FORCES WOULD FALL UNDER CONTROL OF THE MILITIAS OR MERELY BECOME BURDEN ON UN FORCES. AMBASSADOR LEONARD NOTED US WOULD BE MAKING CLEAR TO ISRAEL IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO UNIFIL. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE AREA REMAIN QUIET. IF NECESSARY, WE WOULD ENCOURAGE UN TO ACCEPT BURDEN OF SUPPORTING LEBANESE ARMED FORCES.

14. COMMENT: WHILE MANY OF KADDUR'S COMMENTS WERE REPETITIVE, DISCUSSION PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO CONTINUE US-SYRIAN DIALOGUE ON LEBANON AND REITERATE OUR HOPE THAT SYRIA WILL CONTINUE TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN EAST BEIRUT. WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT KADDUR SEEMED LESS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT SENDING LAF TO SOUTH THAN KHADDAM HAS ON RECENT OCCASIONS. THIS IS PROBABLY THE RESULT OF LATEST VISIT OF SEC GEN WALHEIM, SIILASVUO, ET AL. AMBASSADOR LEONARD AND MR. HOWELL DEPARTED BEFORE CLEARING THIS MESSAGE AND MAY WISH TO ADD THEIR COMMENTS. PELLETREAU

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